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Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky ..... (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Switzerland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

1. **The Chairman**, noting the importance of the work of the Committee, said that he looked forward to the "question time" and dialogues with representatives of the Secretary-General, special rapporteurs and independent experts, which would promote a better understanding of the issues being examined and raise the level of the deliberations. He was convinced that he could count on the representatives of the Member States and the members of the Bureau, who had already had discussions during both official and informal meetings, to cooperate in order to ensure the success of the Committee's work.

Organization of work (A/59/250, A/C.3/59/1, A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/59/L.1/Add.1)

2. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the members of the Committee to chapter II of the report of the General Committee (A/59/250), which established guidelines regarding the conduct of work, relating, among other things, to punctuality, length of statements and rights of reply, and adherence to deadlines imposed for the submission of draft resolutions and inclusion in the list of speakers. He emphasized three guidelines, relating to: (a) the number of resolutions and reports requested of the Secretary-General; (b) the length of resolutions; (c) the need for delegations to allow sufficient time for estimates of expenditures to be prepared by the Secretariat and considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. In view of the volume of the Committee's work, he requested the delegations to maintain discipline and pointed out that, in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly, during the final two weeks of Ramadan, from 1 to 11 November 2004, the schedule of sessions would be adjusted.

3. He recommended that, barring unforeseen events, the timetable adopted by the Committee should be respected. It was particularly important for draft resolutions, which generally required lengthy negotiations, to be prepared by the principal sponsors as early as possible. Delegations initiating proposals were further requested to advise the Chairman accordingly in order for him to establish a list of those initiatives in due time.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), before introducing documents A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/59/L.1/Add.1, drew attention to two developments in connection with the agenda items allocated to the Committee. First of all, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended at its forty-eighth session that programme 19, Human rights, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007, should be referred to the Third Committee for consideration and appropriate action and that the matter should be submitted subsequently to the Fifth Committee for consideration, within the context of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007, under item 109 (Programme planning). In a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Third Committee, the President of the General Assembly formally stated that the Assembly, at its 18th plenary meeting, had decided, in accordance with section III, paragraph 4, of its resolution 57/282, to refer that item to the Third Committee for consideration and appropriate action. Second, in accordance with section D, paragraph (c), of General Assembly resolution 58/316, the President of the Assembly concluded that the fact that the item entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council" was being considered in plenary meeting should not prevent the Third Committee from considering and taking action on the draft resolutions contained in chapter I of the report of the Economic and Social Council. Consequently, the 13 drafts that the Council had adopted by consensus would be referred to the Third Committee, which would consider them under agenda items 94 (two drafts), 96 (seven drafts), 97 (three drafts) and 102 (one draft).

5. Regarding the guidelines established for the conduct of the work of the Committee, he said that according to document A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1, statements on the various items during a general discussion were limited to 7 minutes for delegations and 15 minutes for groups of delegations. Delegations wishing to have the text of their statement distributed must provide 350 copies to the conference officers before the meeting. When item 105 (Human rights questions) was taken up, delegations could make one statement under each of sub-items (a) and (d), which were to be discussed sequentially. They could make up to two statements under sub-items (b), (c) and (e), which were to be considered together, but could not make two statements under the same sub-item. Under agenda items 103 (Elimination of racism and racial discrimination) and

104 (Right of peoples to self-determination), which were to be discussed jointly, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/542 delegations could make two separate statements, i.e., one on each item, if they so wished.

6. As numerous draft resolutions were presented at each meeting, thus overburdening the Secretariat's documentation services, delegations submitting a draft containing text taken from an earlier resolution were requested to download the earlier official document from the United Nations Official Document System (ODS) and to indicate clearly, preferably in boldface characters, either in the electronic version or on the hard copy, any changes or new text. Similarly, in the case of revised draft resolutions, the drafts should be sent to the Secretariat by e-mail or in hard copy, accompanied by the signed list of sponsors and co-sponsors. Sponsors desirous of presenting drafts should inform the Secretary of the Committee as soon as possible in order to enable him to make the appropriate arrangements. Delegations should abide strictly by the deadlines set for the submission of draft resolutions.

7. Noting that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/316, the Committee's web site had been enhanced, he said that a limited-access site had been created which delegations could access by means of a password and on which they could post unofficial documents. Representatives wishing to obtain a password should fill in the appropriate form and provide an e-mail address at which the password would be sent to them.

8. **The Chairman** said it was his understanding that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work contained in document A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1 and the arrangements indicated orally by the Secretary.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), after reading out the list of special rapporteurs and independent experts, said that he had just received a request to invite two additional special rapporteurs and an additional independent expert.

11. **The Chairman** recommended postponing the consideration of the request to a later date. It was his understanding that the Committee wished to approve the list of special rapporteurs and independent experts read out by the Secretary.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **Mr. Hof** (European Union), mentioning several resolutions that the Committee was to consider during the current session, reaffirmed the European Union's interest in the role played by special rapporteurs and independent experts and noted that the Union had been in favour of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 presenting his report at the previous session. He expressed the wish that, as quickly as possible, the Committee should consider inviting, in addition to the persons included in the list it had just approved, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; the independent expert to assist the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in examining the question of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2004/87; and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children.

14. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), drawing the attention of the members to chapter II of the report of the General Committee of the General Assembly (A/59/250), which contained rules pertaining to the financing of work, remarked that inviting two additional special rapporteurs and an additional independent expert would have financial implications and stated that the Programme Planning and Budget Division should be able to present an estimate of expenditures within 48 hours of the Committee's decision.

15. **Mr. Reyes** (Cuba) expressed surprise at the European Union's request, which it was basing on the decision adopted the previous year, when the situation had been different. The request went against the rationalization of the working methods of the United Nations system. If the Committee decided to invite the three persons proposed by the European Union, it should also agree to invite the independent expert on the effects of structural adjustment policies and foreign debt, because the debt problem represented a major obstacle to development in third-world countries. In the specific case of the independent expert to assist the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in examining the question of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, which fell within the purview of the Office of the High Commissioner, not the Third Committee, inviting that expert to present his report to the

Committee would amount to violating his mandate. His delegation was against the idea of financing the invitation of special rapporteurs and independent experts through voluntary contributions, as that would favour the rich countries, which would then be able to impose their views on the Committee. In the final analysis, it would be preferable to abide by the existing list so as to avoid any overlapping of activities and respect the decisions taken by the intergovernmental bodies.

16. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) said that, while her delegation was favourable to the idea of inviting special rapporteurs and independent experts owing to their significant contributions to the work of the Committee, she would appreciate further details, especially regarding the criteria for choosing the persons proposed by the European Union, the financial implications and the speaking time that would be allotted to such rapporteurs and experts, to enable the members of the Committee to make an informed decision.

17. **The Chairman** called upon the members of the Committee to hold discussions with a view to arriving at a decision on the question, if possible by the end of the week.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chairman** suggested appointing as Facilitator, pursuant to section C, paragraph (a), of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, Ms. Astanah Banu Shri Abdul Aziz of Malaysia (Vice-Chairperson), who would be charged with holding informal consultations on the further rationalization of the Third Committee's programme and methods of work.

20. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

(b) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

21. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on social development (A/59/120), pointed out that more focus should be placed on the principle of a people-centred approach to development, which remained too abstract a concept. The path towards social development was fraught with gaps between theory and practice which stemmed from three causes. The first was the social impact of globalization. The understanding and management of social development within the framework of globalization were inadequate and the issues raised in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development had not been pursued to the extent anticipated. The report to be drafted by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization should help to correct that situation. National and international macroeconomic policies and social goals were the second cause. As had been emphasized at the World Summit for Social Development, it was necessary to create an enabling economic environment, which could be achieved only through the adoption of appropriate economic policies. Considerable substantive and political difficulties had yet to be surmounted in order for national and international economic policies to be effective and coherent. It was essential, moreover, to bridge the artificial divide between social questions and economic issues. The third cause related to the capacity of national Governments to undertake social policies, for although social development was a national responsibility, it could not be achieved without the collective commitment and efforts of the international community. Yet the actual exercise of such responsibility was increasingly difficult and countries seemed to be losing their autonomy as they became part of the world economy. The report was of particular significance because it was closely related to the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration and the year 2005 would mark the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development.

22. It was clear from the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004" (A/59/176) that the family continued to play a crucial role in social and human development and the protection of individuals, but that its contribution to the achievement of the objectives of eradication of poverty and the creation of a just, stable and secure society had generally been overlooked. Certain economic and social factors, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic or demographic ageing and retirement, continued to have a significant impact on societies and families. Activities had been undertaken within the framework of the United Nations Programme on the Family. In addition, on 1 September 2004 a new focal point on the family had been appointed within the Division for Social Policy and Development, and on 6 December 2004 a plenary meeting of the General Assembly would be devoted to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

23. With regard to disabled persons, the Commission for Social Development had recommended to the General Assembly that it consider the suggested supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (E/CN.5/2004/4). Although there was no report on persons with disabilities before the Third Committee, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities was on its agenda under item 105, "Human rights questions". As that issue went well beyond human rights questions, it should be dealt with under the item relating specifically to persons with disabilities. Such an approach would not only increase the visibility of the Convention, but would also demonstrate the importance of mainstreaming disability within overall development issues.

24. In terms of the report of the Secretary-General on ageing (A/59/164), the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was marked both by progress and by obstacles. While major strides had been made, and the "ageing dimension" of development had moved forward considerably, much remained to be done to integrate older persons into national and international development frameworks. United Nations system organizations had undertaken to implement the decisions adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, particularly the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, which were working to mainstream ageing into all their activities, policies and programmes. Nevertheless, the human and financial resources devoted to promotion of the social inclusion of ageing were extremely limited, and that constituted a major constraint on the implementation of the Madrid Plan.

25. The Committee played an important role in the search for common solutions to common problems; it was essential not to separate economic issues from social issues, for the two were closely intertwined in the development sphere. It was therefore necessary to overcome compartmentalization; the Third Committee should emphasize collaboration, particularly with the Second Committee.

26. **Ms. Launay** (Director, UNESCO Office at the United Nations), speaking under agenda item 94 (b), referred to the report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/59/267). The Decade had been launched in 2003 in various regions of the world, with the participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, development agencies and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds. Having chosen as its rallying cry "Literacy as freedom", the Decade played a fundamental role, for literacy was a means of creating a society committed to peace, democracy, social justice and general well-being.

27. Currently, more than 100 million children were out of school and some 800 million adults, mostly girls and women, were illiterate. It was essential to be able to read, write and do arithmetic in order to have access to information regarding health, the environment, education and the world of work. Literacy was therefore vital to improving the lives of all and promoting development in all its dimensions.

28. Unfortunately, the importance of literacy was not adequately recognized, and literacy was a low priority on the education agenda in many countries. Unless effective actions were taken, almost 80 countries in the world would not be able to achieve the Education for All (EFA) literacy goal set at the World Education Forum (Dakar, April 2000), namely, a 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy levels by 2015. The international community, Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the

private sector must therefore act in concert and adopt serious and sustained measures.

29. In 2005 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) would launch a new adult literacy initiative, focused on countries with an illiteracy rate of over 50 per cent and/or an illiterate population larger than 10 million, or 33 countries in all. The initiative, focused on literacy for the excluded, would have a particular emphasis on women and should be supported by all development partners.

30. Synergy must be ensured between the Literacy Decade and EFA initiatives, such as the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, the Millennium Development Goals agenda and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, to be launched in 2005. While action was needed at all levels, national Governments were the most crucial actors; they needed the greatest possible support from the United Nations system and development agencies. Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector should be more closely involved in national literacy efforts.

31. **Mr. Cumberbach Miguén** (Cuba) asked the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development to indicate what changes in national and international macroeconomic policy he felt were necessary to achieve social goals, inasmuch as most third-world countries remained saddled with a huge burden of external debt and had for many years been required to make structural adjustments that had genuinely hampered government agencies in their efforts to provide social protection.

32. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, in order to follow up the recommendations and suggestions made by the Secretary-General in his report on preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176), her Government had established a National Family Agency to protect the family and promote all issues relating thereto. The agency was contributing to the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the Year by highlighting the problems facing Syrian families. Her delegation requested the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development to give delegations a general idea of what they could expect from the United Nations as far as the observance on 6 December was concerned.

33. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan), after taking note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176), welcomed the announcement by the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the appointment of a new focal point on the family to monitor progress made by the United Nations in that area; she wished to know what practical steps had been taken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to mark the observance on 6 December. She asked the Director of the Liaison Office of UNESCO to the United Nations whether there were any specific youth literacy projects focused on developing countries, particularly in Africa. Her delegation, which relied on UNESCO to play a pioneering role in that area, wholeheartedly supported the initiatives taken in developing countries. She also wished to know what innovative approaches had been adopted to combat illiteracy.

34. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development), replying to the Cuban delegation, said that social policies must be more integrated with economic policies; to that end, it was necessary to move away from a scale of priorities which tended to place economic issues ahead of social issues. There was also a need for better cooperation between finance ministers and ministers for social affairs so that, before policies were adopted, their consequences were established in a clear and transparent way. The same precautions were needed at the international level. Before a genuinely people-centred approach could be adopted, social policies must be taken fully into account in integrated policy-making.

35. Replying to the Syrian and Sudanese delegations, he said that specific steps had been taken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to mark the 6 December observance. Specifically, in the morning, a plenary meeting of the Assembly would offer Member States an opportunity to report on the measures they had adopted to achieve the objectives of the International Year of the Family. In the afternoon, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs planned to organize, through its focal point on the family, a parallel event which would probably take the form of a round table.

36. **Ms. Launay** (Director, UNESCO Office at the United Nations), replying to the questions put to her, said that there was a need to connect all the dots between the "six Dakar goals" of Education for All and its 12 strategies and the two Millennium Development Goals which supported the overall goal of education for all. The difficulty of compiling statistics arose at each stage. In that connection, she welcomed the efforts undertaken by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in Montreal to establish models in cooperation with Member States. While the statistics contained in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* (A/59/267) were of high quality, they were definitely incomplete, because they did not take into account crucial factors, such as the fact that in some countries extracurricular education was as important as traditional education. Lastly, while Member States generally did not lack a will, some lacked a way. Generally speaking, it was expected that by 2012 there would be a very sharp increase in the number of literate people around the world, political consciousness would develop, girls would have access to education on an equal basis with boys, and adult literacy would be as prevalent as child literacy.

37. UNESCO had a number of external offices, including several in Africa, as well as several institutes devoted solely to education; she drew attention, in particular, to the one in Addis Ababa, which was specifically concerned with capacity-building in Africa. She also noted one of the most recent adult literacy initiatives launched by UNESCO, which was focused on the 33 countries having an illiteracy rate of over 50 per cent or an illiterate population larger than 10 million.

38. **Ms. Abeysekera** (Sri Lanka) raised the question of the definition of the family, which varied considerably from one country to the next. While her delegation was of the view that the family was the nucleus of society, it believed that any social development strategy must be multifaceted and should be elaborated with all necessary precautions. With regard to literacy, she would like to see a clear definition of literacy and the criteria on which it was based.

39. **Mr. Hof** (Netherlands), referring to the impact of globalization on the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, asked the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development whether the best practices adopted by Governments to achieve the Copenhagen goals had already been identified. With reference to the criticisms addressed to the Commission for Social Development, which had been accused of neglecting the social dimension of globalization, he asked how the Commission could better incorporate globalization into its deliberations. He also wished to know how the follow-up of the implementation of the Copenhagen Plan of Action could be better integrated into the Organization's work on the Millennium Development Goals. Lastly, he said that there was a need to avoid compartmentalization of social and economic issues between the Second and Third Committees and asked how the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the World Programme of Action for Youth and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons could be better integrated into development policies and measures, which should make it possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

40. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development), replying to the delegation of the Netherlands, said that it was incumbent upon Member States to follow up the implementation of the Copenhagen Plan of Action. Referring to two goals set out in that plan — employment and social integration — he said that they should be linked to the Millennium Development Goals, and that poverty data should be broken down into different population categories (youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities). Lastly, he hoped that the Commission's report would contribute to a better integration of economic and social policies, which would lead to better management of globalization and its impact. As to best practices, he was waiting to hear from Member States.

41. **Ms. Launay** (Director, UNESCO Office at the United Nations), replying to the Sri Lankan delegation, said there was no definition of literacy that was accepted by everyone. Overall, she believed that literacy consisted of receiving a basic education that would enable a person to read and do arithmetic, regardless of whether that person was a girl or a boy. Specifically, it meant having the ability to cope with daily life, whether one was an adult or a child.

42. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the commitments made by heads of State and Government at the Copenhagen Summit and the twenty-fourth special

session of the General Assembly had been the cornerstone of a new consensus to place people at the centre of development policies. Nevertheless, the efforts made to date did not fulfil the spirit of the texts adopted on those occasions; vast sectors of society, particularly in the developing and least developed countries, were still in a dire situation.

43. Noting that there was still a gap between intentions and actions at the level of national and international policies, he called for a new partnership between developed and developing countries, and urged the former to make concrete efforts to achieve the target of providing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and from 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to least developed countries.

44. Pointing to the support which the Group of 77 and China provided to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), he called on the developed countries and all Member States to emulate them. The countries he represented were completely convinced that while social development was above all a national responsibility, it could not be achieved without the collective commitment of the international community, within the framework of full respect for national sovereignty and cultural and religious diversity.

45. In looking forward to the 10-year review in 2005 of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, he stressed the need to: assess fully the implementation of the 10 commitments adopted in 1995 and confirmed on several occasions thereafter, establish a genuine North-South dialogue, assess comprehensively the obstacles to development, and address the negative impact of globalization on economic and social development, particularly in developing countries and least developed countries.

46. Lastly, in view of the critical situation in which many older persons lived throughout the developing world, there was an urgent need to adopt a realistic approach in order to promote and protect their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights; the Group of 77 and China were fully prepared to assume their share of responsibility for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing with intensified cooperation from their development partners.

47. *Ms. Groux (Switzerland), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

48. **Mr. Hof** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, said that the European Union strongly supported the implementation of the commitments made at the Copenhagen Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly; it was committed to the comprehensive implementation of the Millennium Declaration, including the development goals contained therein, and to the commitments agreed on in other United Nations conferences and summits. For that reason, the European Union welcomed the report entitled "A fair globalization — creating opportunities for all" by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, established by the International Labour Organization; the emphasis in that report was on people-centred globalization, and particular attention was paid to poverty reduction, gender equality, employment, health, education, social security and social services, as well as people's aspiration for democratic participation and material prosperity.

49. Eradicating extreme poverty remained the major social challenge. National policies were the primary responsibility of Governments, but to be effectively implemented, national poverty-reduction strategies needed the active involvement of civil society and the private sector, and considerable support from the international community. That meant national and international resource mobilization combined with increased effectiveness and harmonization of development efforts, more coherence in national, external and development policies as well as the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda.

50. Conscious of the fact that higher employment rates were critical to achieving economic growth and furthering social inclusion and development, the European Union had set itself ambitious goals for the year 2010. The European Council had agreed to promote competitiveness, employment and social cohesion as mutually reinforcing objectives and policies. The European employment strategy and the European cooperation policy on social protection and social inclusion were aimed at promoting full employment, quality and productivity at work,

increased gender equality, social cohesion and an inclusive society. However, further efforts would be necessary because the economic outlook had become less favourable. The European employment strategy had been adapted to take into account the recommendations from the Employment Task Force, which had highlighted the importance of employability, adaptability, balance between flexibility and security, investment in human capital and better governance. Decent work and improved employment opportunities were needed to bring forth stability and a stronger global social cohesion. Given the degree of importance that all Member States attached to those issues, it would be helpful for them to share information on their experiences and those policies and programmes that had yielded positive results.

51. Having singled out migration as one of its policy priorities, the European Union welcomed the lead taken by the Secretary-General in fostering the debate within the Organization. It was firmly committed to securing a balance between the reception and integration of legal immigrants, on the one hand, and the urgent need to stop illegal migration and human trafficking, on the other. In order to foster a better migration policy, the European Union had initiated a new policy towards such neighbours as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as countries on Europe's southern Mediterranean periphery. It was awaiting with interest, the final report of the Global Commission on International Migration, which would, hopefully, enrich the substance of international debate on the issue of migration.

52. With regard to youth, five issues had emerged to join the 10 priorities defined in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond: the impact of globalization on young women and men; the use of and access to information and communications technologies; the dramatic increase in HIV among young people and the impact of the epidemic on their lives; the active involvement of young people in armed conflict both as victims and as perpetrators; and the increased importance of addressing intergenerational issues in an ageing society. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly would have to review, with the full and effective participation of the youth, the results achieved and the challenges remaining with regard to the World Programme of Action. The European Union welcomed the joint establishment by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the United Nations Secretariat, of the Youth Employment Network, which the Union was fully supporting.

53. It hoped that the negotiating process for an international inclusive convention on the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities would continue with the participation of non-governmental organizations. The need to supplement the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities had been clear for several years, and the European Union hoped that, at the next session of the Commission for Social Development, agreement could be reached on the proposed supplement.

54. The European Union attached great importance to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 at the national, regional and local levels, and welcomed the road map for implementation presented in 2003 by the Secretariat.

55. The 2005 session of the Commission for Social Development would be particularly important, and every effort needed to be made to reach the agreed goals. The Commission should become a more action-oriented forum for sharing experiences and best practices. It should foster greater cooperation with the specialized agencies, including ILO, or with initiatives with particular relevance to social development such as the Global Compact. Rather than negotiating agreed conclusions, it should contribute to improving the world social situation and promoting social development. In short, it should be revitalized.

56. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that in spite of the efforts that Member States and the Organization had made over the past 10 years to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and in spite of the many successes scored, much more remained to be done to achieve the goals set by the World Summit for Social Development and the Millennium Summit, since disease, poverty and unemployment still plagued many developing countries. China, therefore, welcomed the reports submitted by the Secretary-General (A/59/120) and the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

57. China, indeed, believed that beyond its positive impact on national well-being, coordinated and balanced social development also contributed to the

maintenance of peace and security. First, it was important for the international community, assisted by all countries, to redouble its efforts to build at the national and international levels, the peace and stability which alone could promote development and eradicate poverty. Second, a world economic order must be established which made for balanced global development and removed the adverse consequences of globalization. Third, developed countries needed to give developing countries a helping hand by honouring their commitments, cancelling debt, speeding up technology transfer and eschewing protectionist trade practices. Fourth, developed and developing countries should seek ways of addressing the contradiction between productivity gains and job creation, and should institute effective social security systems to help vulnerable groups. Fifth, United Nations agencies must assume increased responsibilities for social development, particularly by seeking out best country practices, promoting joint North-South activities and fighting poverty, unemployment and disease.

58. For its part, China was working to eradicate poverty and to create a system of full employment and social security that met national needs. As a matter of fact, the number of rural Chinese living in abject poverty had declined from 80 million in 1993 to 29 million in 2003. By late 2003, more than 256 million Chinese had become urban workers and the unemployment rate had fallen to 4.3 per cent. China was determined to set the interests of its people as a top priority and to spare no effort to reduce poverty and to pursue national development in peace.

59. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the main advantage of the World Summit for Social Development was the attention it had drawn to the human factor. It had been widely acknowledged that while globalization held great prospects for development, it often deepened poverty and inequality. To address those problems, multilateralism must be strengthened, coherent and inclusive strategies formulated and more efficient, transparent and democratic multilateral regimes instituted, with the highest degree of urgency, to counter the injustices imposed by globalization.

60. In the final declaration of their meeting held in New York on 20 September 2004, political leaders the world over had affirmed that persistent hunger and extreme poverty were economically irrational, politically unacceptable and morally shameful, and had tried to muster the political clout to combat those evils. To address the problem as it impinged on the individual, the activities conducted at the international and country levels must be complementary. A free and equitable multilateral trading system must be instituted to create the jobs and wealth that would enable developing countries to progress. Stable and secure inflows of economic, financial and official development assistance resources would also be indispensable. At the country level, it was increasingly being acknowledged that the social impact of macroeconomic policies should be evaluated and that investment in social programmes increased economic productivity. The Rio Group was also of the opinion that democracy and administrative transparency were essential for achieving sustainable development.

61. It noted with concern, however, that certain restrictions prevented Governments from instituting social policies. The international financing system should be reformed because it lacked adequate machinery for preventing and managing international financial crises. The limitations imposed by measures to improve the state of public finances did not allow for infrastructural investments, which happened to be of crucial importance to national economic dynamism. For that reason, the funding agencies could not disburse needed financial resources and the Inter-American Development Bank, for example, had utilized only 30 per cent of its budget in 2003. The Rio Group felt, therefore, that innovative financing mechanisms should be created to cater for public investment without compromising the viability of national public finances.

62. It was convinced that, in spite of all the difficulties, progress in social development could be made by unleashing the required energy and creativity without ever allowing development strategies and policies to lose their human focus.

63. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and having thanked the representative of Qatar for the statement he had made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, recalled that, as stated in the *Report on the World Social Situation* (A/58/153/Rev.1-ST/ESA/284), 1.3 billion people lived in absolute poverty. In his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/59/282), the Secretary-General had made it clear that developing and developed countries alike must honour their commitments under the

Declaration. Developed countries should increase their development assistance, grant debt relief and transfer technology, while developing countries mobilized counterpart resources and reformed their institutions. In paragraph 80, the Secretary-General had also mentioned the terrible consequences of disasters which continued to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of the world's poor, and the spate of hurricanes which had battered the Caribbean recently had been illustrative. In that regard, CARICOM underscored the importance of the work of two conferences planned for January 2005: the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Mauritius and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Japan. Both would be highlighting the increasing vulnerability of small island developing States to external shocks and the devastating effect of natural disasters on their socio-economic development.

64. With regard to agenda item 93, CARICOM commended the work done by the Commission for Social Development in conducting a comprehensive review of the three issues of eradicating poverty, providing full productive employment and enhancing social inclusion, and welcomed the idea of intensifying the interaction between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

65. What was more, the mandates contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Durban Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration, together with their accompanying programmes of action, should serve as essential road maps for the implementation of the Copenhagen Consensus.

66. At the regional level, the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development was redoubling its advocacy to impress upon all partners the complementarity of the economic and social dimensions of development. At the Council's latest meeting, held in October 2003, member Governments had focused on the importance of human resource retraining and reorganization.

67. With help from the Government of the Netherlands, the Caribbean regional head office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had set up a social statistics database which could help Caribbean Governments in social policy formulation. Using the data, analytical tools and training provided, they would be able to establish a social vulnerability index.

68. With regard to the youth, 5 new areas of concern had emerged to join the 10 highlighted by the Secretary-General in his 2003 World Youth Report (A/58/79): the impact of globalization, the impact of information and communications technologies, HIV/AIDS, youth and conflict prevention and intergenerational relationships. A multisectoral approach would be required to achieve the set objectives. CARICOM welcomed the creation of the Youth Employment Network with assistance from the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO, and endorsed the recommendations of the high-level Network Group, which laid special emphasis on employability through investment in education, and on gender equity.

69. Since two thirds of people in the region were less than 30 years old, the Caribbean countries had taken a number of measures within the context of youth development and promotion, more specifically by creating an inter-agency coordinating mechanism which, through the pooling of various resources, was aimed at reducing the HIV/AIDS rate among young people. CARICOM had also launched a Caribbean youth ambassadors programme to elicit youth participation, to develop their leadership capabilities, to enable young people to communicate their views to policy makers and to encourage them to interact with other young people in the region.

70. CARICOM welcomed the report which the Caribbean regional head office of ECLAC had prepared in 2004 on youth and unemployment, analysing the nature and impact of youth unemployment, and proposing solutions that used information technologies to address the problem.

71. On the issue of ageing, she referred to the 2003 *Report on the World Social Situation*, which highlighted several areas of particular interest to the elderly, and specifically commended for their work within the context of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (which had addressed the issue of elderly women) and the Commission on the Status of Women. The Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) deserved particular commendation for drafting a technical assistance

programme for the country execution of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. ECLAC was providing technical assistance to countries in the formulation of national policy for the elderly, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was to be congratulated on the constant attention it focused on the plight of elderly persons living in poverty.

72. At the regional level, statistics showed an increase in the population over the age of 65. In 1998, CARICOM had accordingly adopted the Caribbean Charter on Health and Ageing. In December 2003, the Caribbean regional head office of ECLAC had published a report giving a demographic analysis of the ageing process in the Caribbean. In addition, a seminar on ageing was planned for November 2004.

73. Regarding the disabled, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development studying the situation of the disabled had indicated that, over the past 10 years, human rights advocacy had focused on disability. It was encouraging to note that the Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities were becoming the point of reference for inclusive national policy formulation and for the implementation of programmes benefiting the disabled. CARICOM supported the proposed supplement, which would cover trair ing, violence and ill-treatment as well as health and medical care. She commended the efforts made by the Working Group drafting an international convention on the rights of the disabled, and welcomed the work being done by the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. CARICOM would continue to insist on measures to address the excessive degree of joblessness among the disabled, to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for them.

74. With regard to the family, CARICOM reaffirmed the importance of the many initiatives that the international community had taken to strengthen the family, welcomed the publication by DESA of the study entitled "Major Trends Affecting Families" and took note, in that respect, of the Secretary-General's report on preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176).

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.